

September 10, 2014

### **New Visa fees better represents their actual costs**

***Q: I recently filed for my relative and noticed that application fees seem to have gone up. Why are fees for filing increasing?***

Immigrant visa fees for all family-based petitions increased in September to better reflect their actual costs to embassies and consulates worldwide. Visa applicants typically pay the fee the day of their interview. Most immigrant visa applicants will pay the new fees if their appointments are after September 12.

Family-based immigrant visas, commonly known as “filings,” increased from \$230 to \$325. These include all immigrant visa petitions filed by family members in the U.S., such as spouses, parents, adult children, and siblings. Likewise, fiancé(e) visas, known as “K” visas, increased from \$240 to \$265.

Consular officers and staff take a considerable amount of time reviewing each family-based or fiancé(e) immigrant visa application and interviewing each applicant. Indeed, a recent internal cost-of-service review found that family-based and fiancé(e) visas take more time and manpower to process than other visa categories. The new fees better represent their actual costs.

The review also found that some visa fees should decrease based on the same reasoning. Employment-based immigrant visa fees decreased from \$405 to \$345. Fees for out-of-status “green card” holders who want to determine if they are eligible for returning resident status also decreased, from \$275 to \$180.

The fee for a nonimmigrant visitor’s visa (B1/B2) remains \$160.

Separately, the fee to renounce one’s U.S. citizenship increased from \$450 to \$2,350.

The new fee reflects the real, unsubsidized cost of providing this service. A renunciation is a serious decision, and consular staff must be certain that the person renouncing fully understands the consequences. Consular officers spend substantial amounts of time on each renunciation case. Further, before a renunciation is complete, the case must then come back to the Department in Washington, D.C., for review and a final decision.

U.S. Embassy Kingston processes approximately 100,000 nonimmigrant visa applications and 12,000 immigrant visa applications a year. Each year, the entire U.S. Department of State processes more than 11 million nonimmigrant visas and 600,000 immigrant visa applications. Fees were last revised in 2012.

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